PLAN (A)

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For EXTIRPATING the

VENEREAL DISEASE.

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EXTIRPATING

THE

VENEREAL DISEASE:

IN A

LETTER

FROM

MR. P——, to LORD B——.

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M DCC LXI.

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For EXTIRPATING the

VENEREAL DISEASE.

MY LORD,

I HAD laſt night the moſt whimſical intrigue that fancy can ſuggeſt; you ſtart with, "What is the little man as warped in his principles, as in his perſon?" Believe me, none of the ſex received any injury from me,

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though I conceived with many of them, and was the father of the moſt benign conception.

Methought I had a *tete a tete* with roſeate health, who, pitying my preſent condition, taught me to follow her footſteps, and make the world pay due reverence to her worth. When I awoke, I fell into a train of thinking upon the many evils that mankind derived from that excreſcence of Pandora's box — the venereal diſorder. I cogitated upon the moſt plauſible means of baniſhing it, if not from the face of the earth, at leaſt from that of every inhabitant of this iſland; and Aurora had ſcarce uſhered in the morn before I threw together the following thoughts,

thoughts, which I addreſs to you in this form.

I am ſenſible, that our friend the Dean † has in ſome meaſure anticipated my project; but his ſcheme carries with it ſo very ludicrous an air, and is, in ſome degree, ſo extreamly impracticable, that I do not think my plan ſhould be laid aſide for want of novelty.

The Dean propoſes to ſalivate the inhabitants of all Europe, the prieſts of every denomination not excepted. Now, without this were abſolutely put in practice in every part, at one

† Swift.

and the ſame time, it would be of no manner of ſignification — as the inhabitants of Naples (to begin at the fountain-head) being ſalivated in January, they might be infected afreſh in February by the Lombardians, tho' even their females were prevented having any intercourſe with that people — and ſo on: and the difficulty of ſalivating all Europe (the clergy not excepted) at the ſame period, muſt appear evident to the moſt common obſerver.

Nor do I hold it right, either phyſically or politically, to extirpate the venereal diſorder entirely from the face of Europe; for I do not know, whether the medicinal gentlemen might not

not think it expedient, at ſome particular periods, to import a certain quantity of the Virus for innoculation, or ſome other cogent uſe; which conſideration I ſhall attend to in my plan. Then, again, whilſt we remain ſo perfectly ſound in our body corporate, we ſhall add greatly to the *ſoundneſs* of our body politic, by not only being a more healthy and robuſt people in general (you wont then ſee ſuch a puny wretch as me once in a twelvemonth) and thereby greatly increaſing our wealth, as the ſame number of hands will be able to gain more, without the aſſiſtance of foreigners, by manufactures, labour, and agriculture; — but alſo by the ſucceſs of our arms, as we may expect they will then be

be infinitely more fortunate than ever they were, under even the great duke of Marlborough; for as one Engliſh-man, by the help of roaſt-beef and plumb-pudding, can now eaſily beat ſeven ſoup-meagre Frenchmen; ſo then, doubtleſs, one ſound Engliſh-man, will be able to beat a dozen *rotten Frenchmen.*

Theſe conſiderations, phyſical and political, but more particularly politi-cal, I intend to confine my plan of deracinating the venereal diſorder to the iſland of Great-Britain only. The reaſon why I do not extend it to my weſtern compatriots the Iriſh, is, I muſt acknowledge, infuſed with ſome-thing of a national jealouſy, in a point,

point, which for ſo good a chriſtian as I am, has too much excited my jealouſy. But my Hibernian friends will have this conſolation, that let what accident ſoever happen to them, by the want of my plan taking place in Ireland, they will always be upon a par with us in this reſpect. This may, however, in ſome meaſure alleviate the mortification I have always had, and which every true Briton muſt neceſſarily have, to think that the inhabitants of a vice-royalty, or a ſeparated province, ſhould have one inch more advantage in any particular, than the natives of the mother-country. I dare ſay, my friend the dean, through a certain national prejudice, which even he cannot diveſt himſelf of in all

points,

points, differs with me greatly in this reſpect.

My ſcheme, dear St. J—n, is in a few words this, that there be doctors and ſurgeons, whoſe eminence and ſkill are well atteſted, appointed all over England and Wales, and alſo in Scotland, to examine and inſpect parochially every reſident, within the limits of each pariſh.

That theſe phyſical gentlemen qualify themſelves alſo, by a prior and reciprocal examination, before a certain number of the moſt learned of the quorum. That a proclamation be publiſhed, ſtrictly prohibiting *all procreation* whatever, during the ſpace of

at

at leaſt ſix weeks; and as the holy time of Lent is appointed for faſting, this would be the propereſt period to fix upon for the ſaid abſtinence, as a reſtraint from fleſh would be a great means of enabling the more laſcivious and abandoned to quit their lewd and wicked courſes, at leaſt for that time.

The preparatory celibacy having taken place, as well as the ſubſequent examination and inſpection, a proper and faithful report ſhould be made of the ſame, and ſuch public or private places be appointed in every two pariſhes, for thoſe patients, who were found in any degree contaminated with the diſorder, to undergo a proper courſe of phyſic.

Of every two pariſhes, only one ſhould be put into this courſe at a time, upon the ſuppoſition, that there would not be a ſufficient number of wholeſome people remaining in one pariſh, and who condeſcend to aſſiſt the infected during their purification. By this means the contiguous pariſh might aſſiſt their neighbours during this period, and they, in turn, ſhould be aſſiſted by theſe. — At this time none ſhould be admitted abroad, or allowed to procreate, till they had received a certificate, ſigned by the doctor or ſurgeon, who attended them, of their perfect ſanity ; and even then be defended from any carnal converſation,

ſation, but with ſuch as had received a like certificate.

This ſcheme being general, it of courſe includes both males and females, laity as well as clergy, of all ranks and denominations. Notwithſtanding this plan might be thus far executed, with the greateſt care and preciſion, there might, nevertheleſs, many objects eſcape, either through their own ignorance, or that of their phyſician, or through the artifices of the one or the other: a law ſhould therefore be enforced, that after a certain time limited, any man, however exalted, who communicated this diſorder to a female, ſhould be fined 10*l.* (as in the caſe of a baſtard being laid to

him) for the benefit of pariſh good-eating — this would make the parochial officers very attentive to their duty. The woman, from a dowager dutcheſs, down to a baronet, or alderman's lady, ſhould pay the ſame ſum, under that quality 5*l.* That for the ſecond offence they ſhould ſtand on the pillory; and if they ſhould go ſo far as a third offence, if a man, he ſhould have the offending part cut off, as it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe it, by this time, nearly in a ſtate of amputation; if a woman, ſhe ſhould be diveſted of all appearances of her ſex, except for one particular function.

If

If theſe penalties and puniſhments would not prevent the propagation of the diſorder, from ſome latent embers had eſcaped extinguiſhing; other more exemplary puniſhments might be inflicted—it might be made felony with as much juſtice as the theft of a ſhilling.

Having made theſe neceſſary proviſions for the deſtruction of this diſorder at home; it would be neceſſary to take ſome precautions to prevent the importation of it from abroad. To this end, proper officers ſhould be appointed, for the inſpection of all perſons coming into this kingdom, who ſhould not be admitted to land, without

out having certificates of their health, or at leaſt of their being exempt from this diſorder.

I am not ſo vain a projector, as to imagine, there can be no objections made to this my plan; but as the good of the community is always to be preferred to the intereſt of individuals; and as alſo ſome ſcruples, which may at firſt be made, may, with ſome attention, be renewed, or at leaſt weakened, I think this ſcheme ſhould not be entirely laid aſide, for theſe conſiderations. To evince what I ſay, I ſhall, myſelf, urge the moſt plauſible and weighty objections that can be made to it, and ſhall at the ſame time endeavour to point out the means, if

not

not entirely to remove them, at leaſt to ſoften and render them more ſupportable.

The firſt important and formidable objection that offers, is the diminution of inhabitants that will be occaſioned, and the loſs that poſterity will ſuſtain, by a ſix weeks celibacy throughout Great-Britain. To this it may be anſwered, that the more than redoubled vigour, with which each individual will return to the charge, will at leaſt counterbalance this loſs; as it is not the repetition or frequency of coition that produces children, but the lucky hit of a well muſtered roll, with mutual warm deſires worked up to their proper pitch, reciprocally and critically

tically gratified. If to this we add the ſoundneſs of the offspring, and their being exempted, not only from all venereal taints, but alſo the leproſy, the evil, and many other diſorders, which are its natural heirs; and that thereby many thouſand lives will be ſaved of the firſt nine months produce.

I queſtion whether the number of the inhabitants will be reduced even for the firſt year; and that poſterity muſt be thereby greatly increaſed, is, I think, beyond a doubt; when it is conſidered how many millions of lives muſt only, in the courſe of a century, be produced and ſaved, where they otherwiſe would not, if this deſtructive

tive diſtemper were not exterminated from this iſland.

The next objection, which though it may not carry with it ſo many marks of univerſal oppoſition, may, nevertheleſs, be more formidably ſupported than the preceding; and from this ſimple and right obſervation, "that what is every body's buſineſs is no body's; but what affects the ſeeming intereſt of any particular body of men, will certainly meet with adverſaries, directly or indirectly, from that quarter." I preſume you already anticipate my meaning, and I have ſcarce occaſion to ſubjoin, that theſe opponents are compoſed of the phyſical, or rather the chirurgical part of

the world. I have already premiſed, that the intereſt of individuals ſhould, upon all occaſions, ſubmit to the benefit of the community: to this I may add, that theſe gentlemen will, upon this occaſion, enter into immediate and great practice, and many of them may accumulate large and inſtantaneous fortunes, by this very ſcheme's taking place. Thoſe whoſe merit may be overlooked, with regard to preſent practice, and whoſe dependence may, in ſome meaſure, be upon the continuation of the progreſs of the venereal virus, will certainly be able to make friends to obtain appointed inſpectors at the ſea-ports, as we cannot ſuppoſe common exciſemen ſo able to ſwear to the genuine-

neſs

neſs of the French diſorder, as French brandy. Beſides, if after this there ſhould be any phyſical or chirurgical men unprovided for, I have left a door open for the neceſſary importation of this commodity, duty free, at any convenient period.

I muſt acknowledge that the ladies (I mean the ladies of pleaſure) would have a more reaſonable plea to oppoſe this plan, if this very plan was not ſo replete with advantageous conſequences to them. — To explain this ſeeming paradox; it would be very hard upon theſe, to be obliged to ſhut up their *ſhops* for ſix weeks, when, perhaps, they may have but a ſmall ſtock in *hand*, if many benefits would not

ſlow to them from it in the *end.* I ſay, it would be very cruel for theſe poor females, to be obliged to faſt and pray all Lent (which is generally their greateſt harveſt, by reaſon of there being fewer public diverſions) and be debarred, perhaps, fiſh as well as fleſh (ſprats their common food not excepted) if they did not thereby purge their ſouls as well as bodies — avoid all future diſorders ſo incidental to their trade, and go on ſwimmingly ever-after, without the interruption of one ſingle ſalivation. — Beſides, if, during theſe ſix weeks, they do not gain the uſual profits of their calling, they are at no expence to ſubſiſt (as theſe women, at leaſt, being ſo public, ſhould be cured at the public charge) and

may,

may, therefore, fancy they were aſleep all that time, or paſſed a night with a charitable bilk.

If there ſhould be any *real* ladies ſo far *prieſt-ridden*, as to believe it were too heinous a ſin to diſcontinue the propagation of their ſpecies for ſix weeks; or, being of too delicate a texture to undergo the viſitation of a man upon ſo obſcene an occaſion, ſome proviſios might be made in their favour; for inſtance, they might, in the firſt caſe, being upon a fair examination pronounced *ſound*, be allowed to procreate for the benefit of mankind, after ten days abſtinence; and this they could not think any very great vacation, ſince the Jewiſh ladies,

upon

upon another occaſion, are compelled once a month to a fortnight's celibacy; — but theſe we are to ſuppoſe Chriſtian ladies; and, therefore, this Jewiſh regulation may have but little weight with them. In the ſecond caſe, theſe tender females might have every part of their bodies hidden, but the moſt natural; without we could ſuppoſe them very malignantly infected, which, though not entirely impoſſible, would be extreamly incompatible with their extraordinary delicacy. However this, or ſome ſuch *indulgence*, might prevent their modeſty being offended at the obſcenity of a male inſpection, particularly if they had ever been lain by a man-midwife.

The

The clergy, though a very diſintereſted ſet of men, might, from ſome *religious* motive, oppoſe it; Firſt, As during the ſix weeks celibacy no marriages would be ſolemnized; and, Secondly, As it might alſo, in ſome meaſure, prevent them for the future, by reaſon of the dangers which now flow from a general commerce with the ſex being in a great meaſure prevented. If the firſt objection had any other foundation than the loſs that would accrue to the church, by the ceremonial fees not taking place during that period; it might be anſwered upon the ſame principle, as the objection made with regard to the diminution of inhabitants, and the loſs thereby

thereby occaſioned to poſterity. And I think the latter objection, however religiouſly cloathed, proves ſo good an argument for my plan, that I can never give the health and ſatisfaction of my countrymen up, on the ſuppoſition of its preventing ſome fooliſh matches, which would be productive of nothing but beggary; and, in the end, incumbrances to the pariſhes in which they were ſolemnized. As to ſuch prudential and reaſonable marriages, which are the proper cement of ſociety, they can never be diminiſhed, or detrimented, by this, or any other plan that promotes the benefit of the common-weal. This is giving the argument its greateſt latitude — greater than, upon a proper ſcrutiny, can

can be admitted, and yet we ſee of how little force it is; or rather how much it proves the utility of the ſcheme. But can it ſeriouſly be believed, that men are ſo fooliſh, as to be frightened into marriage, through the fear of being infected with this diſorder; or that they are a whit more ſecure in this ſtate, than if they remained conſtant to any one woman, without the connubial ceremony having been performed.

Perhaps it may be aſked, from whence a ſufficient fund is to ariſe to pay the expence of the execution of this project, and particularly to make a proper recompence to the faculty, for their immediate attendance,

and their future loſſes? I have already had occaſion to hint, that the expence which the ladies of pleaſure ſhould occaſion this way, ſhould neceſſarily and equitably fall upon the public, to whom they were indebted for their misfortunes. This naturally leads us to conſider of a tax, to raiſe a proper ſum for the general ſcheme. I ſhould imagine it could not coſt two millions ſterling, to ſalivate all the inhabitants of Great-Britain as were in a deſperate way, and make an ample proviſion for the gentlemen of the faculty; eſpecially, as it is to be hoped it would not be neceſſary to reduce above one third of the inhabitants to that extremity; and as the other courſes of phyſic

ne and regimens neceſſary would not amount to any very conſiderable ſum.

Suppoſing this calculation to be founded in fact, this neceſſary ſum might, methinks, be eaſily and very equitably produced, by a tax upon — Noſes. Surely no man would think it a burthenſome impoſt, to pay one guinea for the ſecurity of the noſe on his face; and I hope there are at leaſt a fourth part of the inhabitants of this iſland, that have this ornamental feature remaining. There could be no cheating the revenue in this reſpect, and the manner of collecting the tax would be very plain.

Having made the neceſſary proviſion for carrying this plan into execution, it may be needleſs to point out the means of paying the officers or chirurgical inſpectors appointed at the ſea-ports, as the paſſes which they would grant to ſuch as came from abroad in health, might be raiſed for their benefit.

I know but one body of people remaining, who can with any face oppoſe my project: — theſe are the coach-makers †. I have heard it computed,

† I was going to add the peruke-makers — but upon reflexion, I ſuppoſe, the gentlemen of the

puted, that there are at leaſt one hundred chariots rolling about London, upon gallipots and boluſſes; and it would be in vain to hide the truth, the venereal diſorder has no ſmall ſhare in this circulation; ſo that I cannot ſuppreſs my apprehenſions, that ſome of theſe charioteers may become *footmen*. — I do not mean according to the common acceptation, of the which capacity they now officiate literally, upon every door-opening occaſion. I foreſaw the loſſes the coach-makers would ſuſtain, and I acknowledge them; and at the ſame time

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the faculty will continue wearing — their voluminous perukes, they are ſo ornamental.

that

that I am not ſchemiſt ſufficient at this juncture, to deviſe any means for making them a proper recompence — without it be, that they and their wives, their daughters, their maids, and, in ſhort, all their families, as far as their firſt couſins (and no farther) be *ſalivated*, if ſo they ſhould require, *gratis*, and without any of them paying the noſe-tax, though each and every one of them be embelliſhed with that prominent and graceful feature.

Having ſhewn this plan of mine to an intimate acquaintance, when I had got thus far, he inſiſted upon it, that *noſes* ſhould pay in proportion to their length; and he does not think my

ſcheme

ſcheme will be entirely effectual without monkies are included; but this I ſhall leave to the conſideration of thoſe who may chuſe to improve upon my plan.

I would not have you, dear St. J—n, by what I have ſaid, ſuppoſe I intend to include in my ſcheme, the extirpation of the intellectual gonorrhœa; ſo far from this, I would not pretend to perform one ſingle radical cure in this diſorder, which I look upon as altogether beyond the phyſician's ſkill. The utmoſt I can do, will be to point out the ſymptoms of this diſeaſe, that the uninfected may ſhun the contagious; and firſt let me caution every one, who would eſcape being

being infected, to carefully avoid a certain ſet of ladies, whoſe company is nine times more dangerous than that of all the reſt of the ſex put together.

Upon firſt aſſociating with theſe females, one is very apt to be hideouſly troubled with that naſtly diſorder, called the *cacoethes ſcribendi* — this generally brings on an *oozing of the brain* ‡, which is moſt commonly attended

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‡ The moſt celebrated authors that have wrote upon this ſubject, differ greatly in this point: Heroditius Suetonicus is of this opinion; but Saperitius Caput poſitively avers, that this diſcharge is from a watery head; and ſupports this opinion, by his own *anatomical practice*, in the courſe of which

attended with *foul linnen*; from this, pains in the *elbows*, † *knees*, and other parts of the body enſue; and about this period it is neceſſary (as is gene-

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which he ſays, he never knew this ſymptom appear, but in the *pap ſwells*. Many other writers of great authority might be quoted in ſupport of this hypotheſis.

† Here again authorities are dubious; for though this ſymptom is by *moſt writers acknowledged*, yet many of them impute it rather to a rheumatic complaint, occaſioned by theſe parts not having a ſufficient covering, than to the originai gonorrhœa; but I am inclined to believe, with the learned Ragimus, that it may be traced to this original ſource.

rally the caſe indeed) that the patient ſhould be confined.

Theſe are the moſt general ſymptoms and conſequences of the intellectual gonorrhœa, though they frequently vary, according to the conſtitution and diſpoſition of the patient; but notwithſtanding any trifling difference in their appearance, there is ſuch a ſtrict analogy between them, that they cannot be miſtaken by any ſkilful perſon.

But whilſt I am thus probing my patients, I am, perhaps, catching the very diſorder myſelf, and if I ſhould be

be both corporally and mentally infected, I could not expect even my dear St. J—n to associate with, or permit me to subscribe myself his friend and admirer.

A. P.

FINIS.